He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseneth not his hold on me and I orsake him not.
—*The Bhagavad-Gita*

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THE MEANING OF "SEERSHIP"

FOR thousands today—especially among the young—the world of psychic experiences and powers exerts a profound attraction. Books on popular forms of "Yoga" abound, and the dea of graduating from the drug experience to the independent chievement of inner heights and raptures is a common-place of mall talk for many of the new generation. Words and terms used vith respect and restraint by students of Theosophy, if only because hey refer to possibilities to be realized lawfully only at the highest tages of human development, are increasingly subject to vulgarization. It sometimes seems that the expectation of easy acquisition, ommon enough in a materially affluent society, has been transferred o the gaining of subjective qualities and attainments, if not through imple purchase, by locating a teacher or "guru" or joining a group vhich advertises such objectives.

So we are, as students of Blavatskian Theosophy often say, in the nidst of a "cycle of psychism," which redoubles the responsibilities escribed by H.P.B. in her Messages to the American Theosophists. But what can be said to those who are now enchanted by the promse of the development of "yogi powers"? Often, little, when the ppeal of personal advantage or pre-eminence is back of the surace explanations of this interest. Yet as Madame Blavatsky said f the cycle of Spiritualism in her time, underneath the externals of he quest for "phenomena" may hide a hungering of the human pirit, and it is surely too soon, today, to say that there will not be nose who, caught up in the attractions of Yoga, or Astrology, or

other ostensibly "mystic" sources of knowledge, will one day wean themselves of these usually shallow preoccupations and seek a more profound philosophy and synthesis of meaning.

Interestingly enough, already thoughtful observers of modern trends are offering measured warnings of what may be involved or implied by the rush to yoga practices. In *Harper's* for last November, William Irwin Thompson reported on a book by Gopi Krishna, who has formed an alliance with the German physicist, C. F. von Weizsäcker, to investigate the possibilities of uniting yogic disciplines and conceptions with the latest ideas of modern physical theory. The Indian pandit, who "will have nothing to do with modern, pop-culture forms of yoga evangelism," proposes the use of what he terms "Kundalini Yoga" as the means of bringing "illumination and heightened psychic powers" to a "lofty class of men," to whom will then fall "the herculean task of educating humanity in the essentials of this almighty spiritual Law to guide the race to the glorious estate ordained for it." Mr. Thompson sees, he says, the possibility of "a new Papacy and a college of Cardinals in that vision," and he "would not wish to go through that again."

It may be noted that while the power of Kundalini is spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 293), and given further explanation in *The Voice of the Silence,* this idea is *not* allowed to replace the ethical and moral objectives of the Theosophical Movement in priority of emphasis. Instead of an easy promise of the benefits to be gained by the achievement of occult powers, there are the most serious injunctions as to the prerequisites for all such development, with indication of the psychic disasters likely to result for those who pursue this path without the arduous and necessary preparation.

Mr. Thompson shows concern for what seem to him the social implications of the development of an elite of yoga practitioners, supposing this were possible. Jacob Needleman, in *The New Religions,* commenting on Buddhist disciplines, which have also been receiving attention from the young, especially on the West Coast, remarks that the Buddha brought his teachings to a people "whose minds were very much better prepared for experience than our own." Westerners, he notes, are overwhelmingly impressed by "the thunderbolt of Buddha's practicality," but again, in his time this discipline—which was *not* taught openly, or to all—"struck at minds already engaged—perhaps to a point of exhaustion—in metaphysical contemplation." Therefore, Mr. Needleman concludes:

> It is possible that for certain societies and people, a discipline can be too practical in that it provides experiences without the means to understand or value them. To accuse a discipline of such a thing is only to say that it is as yet incomplete, if not imprecise, for *us*.

These are mild enough warnings, yet they bespeak a sanity and balance much needed by the world of today.

To those who inquire about what Theosophy has to say on such matters, one course would be to point to both the complexity of the invisible universe of subjective states and the moral and intellectual obligations assumed by even those who, in the beginning, seek no more than philosophic and metaphysical orientation in these extensive regions. For example, in *The Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 43), William Q. Judge makes it clear that there are varying degrees of clairvoyance or seership, with those entered at the initial stages likely to be extremely deceptive:

> The highest order of clairvoyance—that of spiritual vision—is very rare. The usual clairvoyant deals only with the ordinary aspects and strata of the Astral matter. Spiritual sight comes only to those who are pure, devoted, and firm. It may be attained by special development of the particular organ in the body through which alone such sight is possible, and only after discipline, long training, and the highest altruism. All other clairvoyance is transitory, inadequate and fragmentary, dealing, as it does, only with matter and illusion. Its fragmentary and inadequate character results from the fact that hardly any clairvoyant has the power to see into more than one of the lower grades of Astral substance at any one time. The pure-minded and the brave can deal with the future and the present far better than any clairvoyant. But as the existence of these two powers proves the presence in us of the inner senses and of the necessary medium—the Astral Light, they have, as such human faculties, an important bearing upon the claims made by the so-called "spirits" of the *séance* room.

The Secret Doctrine speaks of three lines of evolution—that of the Mind in addition to Spiritual and Physical (I, 181). This complicates the consideration of psychic experience, as is emphasized by Mr. Judge in an answer to a question concerning "thought," in the *Theosophical Forum* for February, 1894. Here he repeats the idea that "thoughts are things," and after referring to the force exerted by thoughts, continues:

> . . . we see that clairvoyants report that each thought makes a flash or picture objective to the inner sense, and from all the experiments in hypnotism we find that the old claim of occultism

that each thought makes a definite picture must be true. Every clear seer will confirm this from personal experience. Still further; the astral light being a preserver of these pictures like a photographic plate, it follows that every thought has its picture preserved, and by that means what has been done or is being done may be known unerringly. Therefore thoughts, while they may be fugitive so far as concerns the thinker, are not so otherwise, but persist as seeds for good or evil in the whole race.

In "Chelas and Lay Chelas," which appeared in the *Theosophist* for July, 1883, H.P.B. remarks that it is foolish to suppose that anyone can attain to high spiritual states without the necessary discipline:

> . . . There are scores of "natural-born" poets, mathematicians, mechanics, statesmen, etc., but a natural-born Adept is something practically impossible. For, though we do hear at very rare intervals of one who has an extraordinary innate capacity for the acquisition of occult knowledge and power, yet even he has to pass the self-same tests and probations, and go through the same self-training as any less endowed fellow aspirant. In this matter it is most true that there is no royal road by which favourites may travel.

In the same article, after describing a chela as one who has offered himself as a pupil to learn practically the "hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man," H.P.B. lists the required qualifications for chelaship, among which are: "Absolute mental and physical purity; unselfishness of purpose; universal charity; pity for all animate beings; truthfulness and unswerving faith in the law of Karma, independent of any power in nature that could interfere. . . ; a courage undaunted in every emergency, even by peril to life." Then, speaking of the clamor for admittance to chelaship by some members of the T.S., H.P.B. wrote:

> . . . The candidates in question, though plainly warned against it in advance, began wrong by selfishly looking to the future and losing sight of the past. They forgot that they had done nothing to deserve the rare honour of selection, nothing which warranted their expecting such a privilege; that they could boast of none of the above enumerated merits. As men of the selfish, sensual world, whether married or single, merchants, civilian or military employees, or members of the learned professions, they had been to a school most calculated to assimilate them to the animal nature, least so to develop their spiritual potentialities. Yet each and all had vanity enough to suppose that their case would be made an exception to the law of countless centuries' establishment as though, indeed, in their person had been born to the world a new *Avatar!*

Mr. Judge spoke of the complexity of states of consciousness and the subtle distinctions among passive, active, uncontrolled and controlled planes of life in his article "Seership," in the *Path* for April, 1886. Writing about seership that is not of the highest level—which does not, that is, involve the individual's "highest intellectual and ethical faculties" (Sushupti)—he warned that in this case the knowledge obtained is "liable to be mixed, upon resuming the application of the body, with falsehood and with the preconception of the mystic's ordinary waking state, as compared with the true knowledge acquired during the several initiations."

Mr. Judge continues:

> But all these different states are necessary to growth. *Jagrata*—our waking state, in which all our physical and vital organs, senses, and faculties find their necessary exercise and development, is needed to prevent the physical organization from collapsing. *Swapna*—dream state, in which are included all the various states of consciousness between Jagrata and Sushupti, such as somnambulism, trance, dreams, visions, &c—is necessary for the physical faculties to enjoy rest, and for the lower emotional and astral faculties to live, become active, and develop; and *Sushupti* state comes about in order that the consciousness of both Jagrata and Swapna states may enjoy rest, and for the fifth principle, which is one active in Sushupti, to develop itself by appropriate exercise.

Then, further along in the article, Mr. Judge's warnings grow more specific:

> In this materialistic age it is known that the wildest misconceptions exist in the minds of many who are mystically inclined. The generality of mystics and their followers are not free from the superstitions and prejudices which have in church and science their counterpart. . . . The so-called Seer can "enjoy" as harmlessly and as uselessly as a boy who idly swims in the lagoon, where he gains no knowledge and may end his sport in death. Even so is the one who swims, cuts capers, in the astral light, and becomes lost in something strange which surpasses all his comprehension. The difference between such a Seer and the ordinary sensualist is, that the first indulges both his astral and physical senses to excess, while the latter his physical senses only. These occultists fancy that they have removed their interest from *self*, when in reality they have only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred their interest to the things which concern their larger span of life. . . . To be able to solve the mysteries of any consciousness whatever, even of the lowest physical, while in trance, is as vain a boast of the hunters for such a state as that of physiologists or mesmerists. . . . The

surest way to draw down your higher nature into the miry abyss of your physical and astral world, and thus to animalize yourself, is to go into a trance or to aspire for clairvoyance.

Mr. Judge concludes this article:

> By merely training the psychical power true progress is not gained, but only the enjoyment of those powers; a sort of alcohol on the astral plane, which results in unfavorable Karma. The true path to divine wisdom is in performing our duty unselfishly in the station in which we are placed, for thereby we convert lower nature into higher, following Dharma—our whole duty.

This, then, is the answer to the question asked frequently: "How are the defects of the lower clairvoyance to be overcome?" It is the great battle of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* which begins by cultivating "clear seeing" on this plane. This is to be accomplished by freeing the mind of false ideas, by learning to check the information that comes to us by the light of reason and strict honesty, and by verifying conclusions by comparison with basic principles. And also by transforming the selfish, self-centered, personal nature into a servant of the Higher Self. In the course of this dual process, the power of the Will comes to birth. It is then that the soul-powers of the inner man may come into being, naturally and safely, while the sight that is gained will be without distortion.

An untrained clairvoyant, regarding a person at a distance, may see an appearance entirely different from reality. He may, in the depths of winter, appear clad in spring clothing, because of his thoughts at the time which generate an illusion for the seer. Misleading information may be due to the partial experience of the inner senses brought over from past lives; and to the partial penetration of the astral plane, limited vision being mistaken for the whole.

That these possibilities are well known to the Spiritual Seer is demonstrated in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 591):

> The soul of the clairvoyant may liberate itself, and perceive things subjectively. And yet, as the sentient principle of the brain is alive and active, these pictures of the past, present, and future will be tinctured with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision. But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncolored and undistorted, whereas, the clairvoyant, unable to control the vibrations of the astral waves, will perceive more or less broken images through the medium of the brain. The seer can never take flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his

> will as the rest of his body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit. Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership. . . .
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> This state is as far above modern clairvoyance as the stars above glow-worms.

The prerequisites for clear-sightedness as all the Teachers have said, are devotion to the high ethical and moral intentions of the Path and philosophic understanding, the one growing out of the life to be lived, the other from study. How shall inquirers into "mysteries" become persuaded of this? Only, it seems certain, through recognition of the authenticity of the wisdom and knowledge of those on whom we have relied in this brief survey of the question. There is a power in the writings of these teachers which is not to be discovered elsewhere.

Search for Truth

"I say it again; it is only theosophy, well understood, that can save the world from despair, by reproducing social and religious reform—a task once before accomplished in history, by Gautama, the Buddha: a peaceful reform, without one drop of blood spilt, each one remaining in the faith of his fathers if he so chooses. To do this he will only have to reject the parasitic plants of human fabrication, which at the present moment are choking all religions and churches in the world. Let him accept but the essence, which is the same in all; that is to say, the spirit which gives life to man in whom it resides, and renders him immortal. Let every man inclined to go on find his ideal—a star before him to guide him. Let him follow it, without ever deviating from his path; and he is almost certain to reach the Beacon-light of life—the TRUTH: no matter whether he seeks for and finds it at the bottom of a cradle or of a well."

H. P. Blavatsky

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

THERE is a very great difference between the Theosophical Movement and any Theosophical Society. The Movement is moral, ethical, spiritual, universal, invisible save in effect, and continuous. A Society formed for theosophical work is a visible organization, an effect, a machine for conserving energy and putting it to use; it is not nor can it be universal, nor is it continuous. Organized Theosophical bodies are made by men for their better co-operation, but, being mere outer shells, they must change from time to time as human defects come out, as the times change, and as the great underlying spiritual movement compels such alterations.

The Theosophical Movement being continuous, it is to be found in all times and in all nations. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great movement is to be discerned. Jacob Boehme's work was a part of it, and so also was the Theosophical Society of over one hundred years ago; Luther's reformation must be reckoned as a portion of it; and the great struggle between Science and Religion, clearly portrayed by Draper, was every bit as much a motion of the Theosophical Movement as is the present Society of that name—indeed that struggle, and the freedom thereby gained for Science, were really as important in the advance of the world, as are our different organizations. And among political examples of the movement is to be counted the Independence of the American colonies, ending in the formation of a great nation, theoretically based on Brotherhood. One can therefore see that to worship an organization, even though it be the beloved theosophical one, is to fall down before Form, and to become the slave once more of that dogmatism which our portion of the Theosophical Movement, the T.S., was meant to overthrow.

Some members have worshipped the so-called "Theosophical Society," thinking it to be all in all, and not properly perceiving its *de facto* and piecemeal character as an organization nor that it was likely that this devotion to mere form would lead to a nullification

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of Brotherhood at the first strain. And this latter, indeed, did occur with several members. They even forgot, and still forget, that H. P. Blavatsky herself declared that it were better to do away with the Society rather than to destroy Brotherhood, and that she herself declared the European part of it free and independent. These worshippers think that there must be a continuance of the old form in order for the Society to have an international character.

But the real unity and prevalence, and the real internationalism, do not consist in having a single organization. They are found in the similarity of aim, of aspiration, of purpose, of teaching, of ethics. Freemasonry—a great and important part of the true Theosophical Movement—is universally international; and yet its organizations are numerous, autonomous, sovereign, independent. The Grand Lodge of the state of New York, including its different Lodges, is independent of all others in any state, yet every member is a Mason and all are working on a single plan. Freemasons over all the world belong to the great International Masonic Body, yet they have everywhere their free and independent government.

When the Theosophical Society was young and small, it was necessary that it should have but one government for the whole of it. But now that it has grown wide and strong, having spread among nations so different from each other as the American, the English, the Spanish, the Swedish and others in Europe, and the Hindu, it is essential that a change in the outward form be made. This is that it become like the Freemasons—independent in government wherever the geographical or national conditions indicate that necessity. And that this will be done in time, no matter what certain persons may say to the contrary, there is not the slightest doubt.

The American Group, being by geographical and other conditions outwardly separate, began the change so as to be in government free and independent, but in basis, aspiration, aim and work united with all true Theosophists.

We have not changed the work of H.P.B.; we have enlarged it. We assert that any person who has been admitted to any Theosophical Society should be received everywhere among Theosophists, just as Masons are received among Masons. It is untheosophical to denounce the change made by the American Group; it is not Theosophy nor conducive to its spread to make legal claims to theosophical names, symbols and seals so as to prevent if possible others from using them. Everyone should be invited to use

our theosophical property as freely as he wishes. Those who desire to keep up H.P.B.'s war against dogmatism will applaud and encourage the American movement because their liberated minds permit; but those who do not know true Theosophy, nor see the difference between forms and the soul of things, will continue to worship Form and to sacrifice Brotherhood to a shell.

THE LINE OF INTENTION

The great mistake of religionists in our age has been the classification of good and evil. There is nothing good in itself. There is nothing evil in itself. It is the use to which anything is put that makes it good or makes it evil. How can we draw a fine line between good and bad in every case? Good and evil are judged by the effects that flow from the action done, but what might *seem* bad in one case might be in fact the highest good, and what might seem good in another case might, in fact, lead to the greatest evil. Just a hair's line divides the Divine from the Satanic. And that hair's line consists not in this nor in that mode of conduct, but in the clearly presented *motive* or intention of the one who acts. A good motive can never produce altogether evil results, and yet a good motive is not enough. We may have the best motive in the world, but if we have not also knowledge and wisdom, we may unintentionally do a wrong thing when we intended to do good; and sometimes we may do a good thing when we intended to do evil. Thus true morality may be seen not to lie in the act itself, but in the motive; it depends on the knowledge and intelligence of the being acting.

The lines of true morality may go anywhere, but by this is *not* meant that we do evil that good may come! How could we do evil if our perception is good, if our knowledge is clear, if our motive is unquestioned and without self-interest? No imaginable evil could flow under such conditions, which are of the nature of the Spirit. The widest range of intelligence and wisdom are required to make it possible for no evil effects to flow even if good is intended.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

letters • questions • comment

How can anyone undertake the long development toward Self-realization in a time when conditions are so chaotic that nothing is certain about either the present or the future? How can one tell now what will be lasting?

Given the instability of the time in which we live, it may seem natural to feel an imperative need to *do* something; to find a solid place to stand on; to try to impose some degree of order on the chaos of events, rather than just philosophize. But if we assume that the Self we aspire to know has the capacity to outlast transient conditions, then what we do, to be worth doing, must have an enduring quality, too. In other words, what is of lasting merit will also be of immediate good, however obscurely.

The question points up an important consideration in the matter of knowing one's self. Much of modern psychology is concerned with the developmental process of evolving a sense of self. Considered from a Theosophical standpoint, this seems to be the responsible involvement of the returning ego in all the aspects of life which his past Karma has generated. Through the conditions afforded by his past actions he gathers together the "five senses and the mind," and out of the experiences brought forth, he develops a sense of himself which he, along with others, considers to be "I." But this self, consisting of all our opinions, views, likes and dislikes, knowledge, weaknesses and strengths, masks a deeper self, much harder to define. It is this deeper self which is the ever-present observer of all choice and action, the One within. It is by cultivating an awareness of this self that we can begin to see meaning in life in terms of the evolution of the soul—that our experience becomes a conscious fusion of "man's will and his Karma." By developing the ability to distinguish the continuity in ourselves, perception of the element of continuity within the external world may also be had.

From this general sense of continuity comes an awareness that all the elements of our lives are in continual motion; that cycles are not only the external evidence of the constant alternation of cause and effect, but that they are the very movement of our inner being. The "time and tide in the affairs of men" is a cyclical movement of

our thought into concrete form, again creating the conditions for further incarnations of thought. Thus we have the paradox of constantly changing conditions, because the principle of Motion itself is eternal.

If this is the case, the stability which by implication is sought by the question is not to be gained by pursuing conditions whose predictability is assured. But it may be discovered in the inexorable fact that whatever conditions we must live through or are affected by, we, as the innermost self, will go through them as observer and experiencer—and ultimately, as knower. The measure in which one can find this kind of stability in any circumstance will surely contribute to the growing sense of "self-realization." And in thus widening our own perceptions, we encourage others to broaden theirs.

Even a little introspective thought reveals that the character of events is significantly colored by our own interpretation of their meaning. This indicates that, unless we want to go in for manipulating outward circumstances, the only power we can exert comes through discovering the illusions and faulty perceptions that distort our own thinking. Such power is, however, not inconsiderable. Spiritual perception transcends and transforms the conditions in which it is focused. Its distinctive quality is that it uses all faculties to the best advantage. Its discrimination is the proper use of everything. It neither abuses nor rejects.

From this, it seems clear that the realization of the Self is most desirable, although also most demanding. Any conditions, no matter what they are, finally submit to replacement, mainly because trying to realize the higher Self in action is not changing one set of limitations with another, but is replacing ignorance of our powers with knowledge of their correct use; it is application of what we can discover in ourselves of universal principle, instead of adopting a new code or custom or religious decree.

It might also be said that the pursuit of this kind of development is indeed a long task, as the questioner observes. But, on the other hand, accomplishment does not lie entirely in its completion, since every effort toward attainment must necessarily produce its appropriate effect. As Krishna advised Arjuna: "Even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk." So whether or not the whole task is of long duration is really immaterial to whether it is worth doing, and at least some of its advantages are immediately to hand.

Mr. Judge describes the nature of genuine self-development in his article "Daily Psychology." (THEOSOPHY 60:5.) Taking up a sentence from the *Gita,* "The Self is the Friend of Self and also Its Enemy," he begins by calling attention to the fact that there are, or appear to be, two selves: the higher; and its reflection in matter, distorted by our vulnerability to its illusiveness. Of the significance of these two selves, he says:

> The next injunction, to "raise the self by the self," clearly points to this; for, as a thing cannot raise itself without a fulcrum, the self which will raise us must be the higher one, and that which is to be raised is the lower.
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> In order to accomplish this task we must gain an acquaintance with the self which is to be raised. The greater and more accurate that acquaintance is the quicker will proceed the work of elevating the being who attempts it.

The obstacles are in our own mental perceptions, not because they are wrong in themselves, but because we perceive them, when conscious of them at all, *as if* they were representative of the whole spectrum of truth instead of only a limited part. This applies not only to our opinions, but to the fundamental biases through which we interpret the world. It is, he makes clear, only by looking for the higher self within, and endeavoring to adopt that stance, that we may distinguish ourselves from these assumptions. He continues:

> Our first step and the most difficult—for some, indeed, impossible—is to shock ourselves in such a manner that we may quickly be able to get out of, or rather understand, our own mental methods. I do not mean that we must abandon all our previous training and education, but that we shall so analyze all our mental operations as to know with certainty, to easily perceive, the actual difference in method between ourselves and any other person. This is a thing seldom undertaken or accomplished nowadays. Each one is enamoured of his own mental habits, and disinclined to admit that any other one can be better. When we have become acquainted with this mental path of ours, we are then in position to see whether in any particular case our view is false. . . .
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> For while we remain in ignorance of the method and path of our mind's action, there is no way in which we can compare with other minds. We can compare views and opinions, but not the actual mechanics of thought. We can hear doctrines, but are unable to say whether we accept or reject from right reasoning or because our peculiar slant on the mental plane compels us to ratiocinate wholly in accordance with a mental obliquity acquired by many years of hurried life.

Mr. Judge illustrates his meaning here by observing that the novelist sees the lives of others with a distinct purpose in mind, and therefore understands them in a way different from the social planner's, for instance, or the artist's. The philosophic person, we may gather, is the one who can, while taking up any point of view, remain to some extent aware that each outlook is limited in its perspective. The ability to enter into various mental attitudes, yet to *be* none of them, is a prerequisite for developing the discernment that recognizes what is of lasting value in the here and now.

> The attitude of mind proposed is not to be observed only toward our literature and the philosophy studied; it is to be that of every hour and applicable to our dealings with our fellowmen. It will lead us to discern the common failing of refusing to consider the thoughts expressed by another because his or her personality is disagreeable to us. Often in our ranks we can find those who never pay any attention to certain other members who they have decided cannot reason properly or talk clearly.

Nor is the value of this endeavor limited to broadening the scope of our own minds. Efforts in this direction have a wider influence as well:

> Now aside from all considerations of charity and politeness, there is an occult law much lost sight of, and that is that everyone is led insensibly by Karmic law to address others on these topics and to afford an opportunity to the person addressed of taking a leap, so to say, out of his own favorite way, the way in which the other person presents the thought in his mind. But if we refuse to use the opportunity, either by absolutely running away or by covering our minds with a hard coat of indifference, the new and bright idea just trembling into the field of our consciousness is thrown back and lost in the dark recesses of the mental plane. Or, taking another view, we may under Karmic law be the one and only person just then fitted to elucidate our brother's idea, and we remain still the debtor to him if we do not accept the opportunity.

Thus, whether or not we undertake the "long development toward Self-realization" depends very little on the stability of conditions. It depends rather on a conviction of the all-embracing reality of that Self.

ENVIRONMENT

TO the Western mind the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation contain difficulties which, while they seem imaginary to the Eastern student are nevertheless for the Western man as real as any of the other numerous obstructions in the path of salvation. All difficulties are more or less imaginary, for the whole world and all its entanglements are said to be an illusion resulting from the notion of a separate I. But while we exist here in matter, and so long as there is a manifested universe, these illusions are real to that man who has not risen above them to the knowledge that they are but the masks behind which the reality is hidden.

For nearly twenty centuries the Western nations have been building up on the notion of a separate I—of *meum* and *tuum*—and it is hard for them to accept any system which goes against those notions.

As they progress in what is called material civilization with all its dazzling allurements and aids to luxury, their delusion is further increased because they appraise the value of their doctrine by the results which seem to flow from it, until at last they push so far what they call the reign of law, that it becomes a reign of terror. All duty to their fellows is excluded from it in practice, although the beautiful doctrines of Jesus are preached to the people daily by preachers who are paid to preach but not to enforce, and who cannot insist upon the practice which should logically follow the theory because the consequences would be a loss of position and livelihood.

So when out of such a nation rises a mind that asks for help to find again the path that was lost, he is unconsciously much affected by the education not only of himself but also of his nation through all these centuries. He has inherited tendencies that are hard to be overcome. He battles with phantasms, real for him but mere dreams for the student who has been brought up under other influences.

When, therefore, he is told to rise above the body, to conquer it, to subdue his passions, his vanity, anger and ambition, he asks, "what if borne down by this environment, which I was involuntarily born into, I shall fail." Then when told that he must fight or die in

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the struggle, he may reply that the doctrine of Karma is cold and cruel because it holds him responsible for the consequences which appear to be the result of that unsought environment. It then becomes with him a question whether to fight and die, or to swim on with the current careless as to its conclusion but happy if perhaps it shall carry him into smooth water whose shores are elysian.

Or perhaps he is a student of occultism whose ambition has been fired by the prospect of adeptship, of attaining powers over nature, or what not.

Beginning the struggle he presently finds himself beset with difficulties which, not long after, he is convinced are solely the result of his environment. In his heart he says that Karma has unkindly put him where he must constantly work for a living for himself and a family: or he has a life-long partner whose attitude is such that he is sure were he away from her he could progress: until at last he calls upon heaven to interpose and change the surroundings so opposed to his perfecting himself.

This man has indeed erred worse than the first. He has wrongly supposed that his environment was a thing to be hated and spurned away. Without distinctly so saying to himself, he has nursed within the recesses of his being the idea that he like Buddha could in this one life triumph over all the implacable forces and powers that bar the way to Nirvana. We should remember that the Buddha does not come every day but is the efflorescence of ages, who when the time is ripe surely appears in one place and in one body, not to work *for his own* advancement but for the *salvation of the world.*

What then of environment and what of its power over us?

Is environment Karma or is it Reincarnation? THE LAW is Karma, reincarnation is only an incident. It is one of the means which The Law uses to bring us at last to the true light. The wheel of rebirths is turned over and over again by us in obedience to this law, so that we may at last come to place our entire reliance upon Karma. Nor is our environment Karma itself, for Karma is the subtle power which works in that environment.

There is nothing but the SELF—using the word as Max Müller does to designate the Supreme Soul—and its environment. The Aryans for the latter use the word *Kosams* or sheaths. So that there is only this Self and the various sheaths by which it is clothed, beginning with the most intangible and coming down to the body, while

outside of that and common to all is what is commonly known as environment, whereas the word should be held to include all that is not The Self.

How unphilosophical therefore it is to quarrel with our surroundings, and to desire to escape them! We only escape one kind to immediately fall into another. And even did we come into the society of the wisest devotees we would still carry the environment of the Self in our own bodies, which will always be our enemy so long as we do not know what it is in all its smallest details. Coming down then to the particular person, it is plain that that part of the environment which consists in the circumstances of life and personal surroundings is only an incident, and that the real environment to be understood and cared about is that in which Karma itself inheres in us.

Thus we see that it is a mistake to say—as we often hear it said —"If he only had a fair chance; if his surroundings were more favorable he would do better," since he really *could not* be in any other circumstances at that time, for if he were it would not be he but some one else. It must be necessary for him to pass through those identical trials and disadvantages to perfect the Self; and it is only because we see but an infinitesimal part of the long series that any apparent confusion or difficulty arises. So our strife will be, not to escape from anything, but to realize that these *Kosams,* or sheaths, are an integral portion of ourselves, which we must fully understand before we can change the abhorred surroundings. This is done by acknowledging the unity of spirit, by knowing that everything, good and bad alike, is the Supreme. We then come into harmony with the Supreme Soul, with the whole universe, and no environment is detrimental.

The very first step is to rise from considering the mere outside delusive environment, knowing it to be the result of past lives, the fruition of Karma done, and say with Uddalaka in speaking to his son:

"All this Universe has the Deity for its life. That Deity is the Truth. He is the Universal soul. He Thou art, O Svetaketu!" (*Chandogya Upanishad,* vi.)

THE CURE OF DISEASES

MORTAL ills and the needs of the stomach rank next after the instinct of self-preservation among all the subjects which engage the attention of the race. If we do not go on living we cannot do the work we think there is to do; if we remain hungry we will lose the power to work properly or to enjoy, and at last come to the door of death. From bad or scanty food follows a train of physical ills called generally disease. Disease reaches us also through too much food. So in every direction these ills attack us; even when our feeding is correct and sufficient it is found that we fall a prey because our Karma, settled by ourselves in some previous life, ordains that we enter on this one handicapped by the hereditary taint due to the wickedness or the errors of our fathers and mothers. And the records of science show that the taint in the blood or the lymph may jump over many lives, attacking with virulence some generation distant very far from the source. What wonder, then, that the cure of disease is an all-absorbing subject with everyone! The Christian knows that it is decreed by Almighty God that He will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children even to the third and fourth generation, and the non-believer sees that by some power in nature the penalty is felt even so far.

All of this has given to the schools of mental and so-called "metaphysical" healing a strong pull on the fears, the feelings, the wishes, and the bodies of those to whom they address themselves, and especially in the United States. That there is more attention given to the subject in America seems true to those who have been on the other side of the Atlantic and noticed how small is the proportion of people there who know anything about the subject. But in the United States in every town many can be found who know about these schools and practise after their methods. Why it has more hold here can be left to conjecture, as the point under consideration is why it has any hold at all. It is something like patent medicine. Offer a cure to people for their many ills, and they will take it up; offer it cheap, and they will use it; offer it as an easy method, and they will rush for it under certain conditions. Metaphysical healing is easy

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NOTE.—This article was first printed by Wm. Q. Judge in the *Path* for September, 1892.

for some because it declares, first, that no money need be paid to doctors for medicine; second, that medical fluids and drugs may be dispensed with; and third, that it is easily learned and practised.

The difficulties that arise out of the necessities of logic are not present for those who never studied it, but are somewhat potent with those who reason correctly;—but that is not usual for the general run of minds. They see certain effects and accept the assumed cause as the right one. But many persons will not even investigate the system, because they think it requires them to postulate the non-existence of that which they see before their eyes. The statements quoted from the monthly *Christian Science* in March *Path*[1] are bars in the way of such minds. If they could be induced to just try the method offered for cure, belief might result, for effects indeed often follow. But the popular mind is not in favor of "mind cure," and more prominence is given in the daily papers to cases of death under it than to cures. And very full reports always appear of a case such as one in March, where "faith curers," in order to restore life, went to praying over the dead body of one of the members of a believing family.

During a recent tour over this country from the Atlantic to the Pacific and back, I had the opportunity of meeting hundreds of disciples of these schools, and found in nearly all cases that they were not addicted to logic but calmly ignored very plain propositions, satisfied that if cures were accomplished the cause claimed must be the right one, and almost without exception they denied the existence of evil or pain or suffering. There was a concurrence of testimony from all to show that the dominant idea in their minds was the cure of their bodily ills and the continuance of health. The accent was not on the beauty of holiness or the value to them and the community of a right moral system and right life, but on the cure of their diseases. So the conclusion has been forced home that all these schools exist because people desire to be well more than they desire to be good, although they do not object to goodness if that shall bring wholeness.

And, indeed, one does not have to be good to gain the benefit of the teachings. It is enough to have confidence, to assert boldly that this does not exist and that that has no power to hurt one. I do not say the teachers of the "science" agree with me herein, but only that whether you are good or bad the results will follow the firm prac-

[1] See *"Affirmations and Denials,"* reprinted in THEOSOPHY for April, 1914.

tice of the method enjoined, irrespective of the ideas of the teachers.

For in pure mind-cure as compared with its congener "Christian Science," you do not have to believe in Jesus and the gospels, yet the same results are claimed, for Jesus taught that whatever you prayed for with faith, that you should have.

Scientific research discloses that the bodies of our race are infected with taints that cause nearly all of our diseases, and school after school of medicine has tried and still tries to find the remedy that will dislodge the foulness in the blood. This is scientific, since it seeks the real physical cause; metaphysical healing says it cures, but cannot prove that the cause is destroyed and not merely palliated. That there is some room for doubt history shows us, for none will deny that many a pure thinking and acting pair have brought forth children who displayed some taint derived from a distant ancestor. Evidently the pure individual thoughts had no power over the great universal development of the matter used by those human bodies.

Turning now to medicine, we find the Italian Count Mattei promulgating a system of cure by the homeopathic use of subtle vegetable essences which may well give pause to those who would make universal the curing by faith or mind alone. Some of his liquids will instantly stop violent pain, restore sight, give back hearing, and dissipate abnormal growths. His globules will make a drunken man sober, and given to the nurse who suckles a babe, will cure the child who takes the milk. The drunkard and the child do not think about or have faith in the remedies, yet they cure. Is it not better to restore health by physical means and leave the high teachings of the healers, all taken from well-known sources, for the benefit of our moral nature?

And if Christian healers read these lines, should they not remember that when the prophet restored the widow's son he used physical means—his own magnetism applied simultaneously to every member of the child's body, and Jesus, when the woman who touched his garment was cured, lost a portion of his vitality—not his thoughts—for he said "virtue" had gone out from him? The Apostle also gave directions that if any were sick the others should assemble about the bed and anoint with oil, laying on their hands meanwhile: simply physical therapeutics following a long line of ancient precedent dating back to Noah. Moses taught how to cure diseases and to disinfect places where contagion lurked. It was not

by using the high power of thought, but by processes deemed by him to be effectual, such as sprinkling blood of animals slaughtered in peculiar circumstances. Without declaring for or against his methods, it is very certain that he supposed by these means subtle forces of a physical nature would be liberated and brought to bear on the case in hand.

The mass of testimony through the ages is against healing physical ills by the use of the higher forces in nature, and the reason, once well known but later on forgotten, is the one given in the article of January, 1892,[2]—that diseases are gross manifestations showing themselves on their way out of the nature so that one may be purified. To arrest them through thought ignorantly directed is to throw them back into their cause *and replant them in their mental plane.*

This is the true ground of our objection to metaphysical healing practices, which we distinguish from the assumptions and so-called philosophy on which those methods are claimed to stand. For we distinctly urge that the effects are not brought about by any philosophical system whatever, but by the practical though ignorant use of psycho-physiological processes.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

[2]See "Of Metaphysical Healing," reprinted in THEOSOPHY for April, 1914.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT

The expression "creative vision" may seem a contradiction of terms; yet it is the quality of some men to see that which never has been but which can be within the framework of reality and would add to the quality of living. Such creative vision may become an active cause of events, without which they would not occur. At their best utopians have that gift. . . . Whenever circumstances press especially hard upon men, unless their spirits are completely broken they persist in picturing a good world that for the present is denied them. When men cease to produce utopias it will be because they are all dead, in spirit, if not in body—or else because life is so good that they cannot imagine it to be better.

—ARTHUR E. MORGAN

on the lookout

Beyond Biology

Avery Weisman, in "Psychological Death" (*Psychology Today,* November, 1972), assumes that the human being must be defined by more than the sum of his biological functions. Death, he argues, is a psychological process carrying its own peculiar rhythms, parallel and intertwined though they may be with the physical degeneration. These psychological processes, which affect the lives of all concerned, are, as Weisman says, largely ignored by our cultural biases:

> While our society pays scrupulously close attention to the medical trajectory of death, we give short shrift to the psychological trajectory of dying. We tend to mistake a dying person for a dead body, and to mistake death for a biological endpoint.

Neglect of Psychological Aspect

The apprehensions of the dying relate only partly to the impending departure, the author maintains. Often there is a practical concern for the effects the event will have on the lives of those left behind, that goes unattended and unresolved. This happens because even doctors often are not able to accept the psychological aspect of the process except by treating it as an inexplicable tragedy best avoided or ignored. The consequence of this, Weisman says, is that "everyone involved repudiates every one else while remaining physically present and officially concerned." He believes that a different attitude toward death would make it a more natural event:

> The need is to move the definition of lethality beyond strictly organic factors, so that death can be understood as a confluence of biological, social and psychological forces intersecting only at a fateful moment.

Resulting Distortions and Pretense

He goes on to say that the common view of death produces psychological consequences for everyone that prevent its assuming a natural place in human experience:

> Our strategy for the avoidance and denial of death goes hand-in-hand with our predisposition to take an exclusively medical

view of dying. Many an adult has never witnessed a death, never attended a funeral, or been in contact with anyone acutely bereaved, despite death's propinquity to everyday life. Death simply is not real.

Tactics that deny death are like the pious fictions that we once used to discourage children's questions about sex and birth. Now, of course, far fewer adults hesitate to answer questions about sex that only a few years ago could not even have been asked. The tendency to protect children from uncomfortable facts is disappearing. We have realized that the outcome of such protection is, too often, that the child develops the very problems that deception and denial were supposed to prevent.

Death not an "Evil"

A more natural view of death, Dr. Weisman believes, would lead people to regard it as the complement of birth, as "that other existential frontier." From this standpoint, we could ask honest questions and make dispassionate judgment, and not hide our confusion under a pose of being ingenuous. He exposes the psychological attitudes to which we are prone:

Our common belief, augmented by cultural bias, is that death is a deplorable, evil, unnecessary, and premature event. The plight of dying awakens a sense of dread and annihilation in every man. Yet, as Swift said, "It is impossible that anything so natural, so necessary, and so universal as death, should ever have been designed by providence as an evil to mankind."

Extinction Unimaginable

Mr. Weisman divides the religious explanations of what happens at death into three categories: restoration, in which consciousness after death includes remembrance of life on earth; metamorphosis, which proposes rebirth but without consciousness of a previous existence; and extinction of the personality except as it may survive in the continued beneficence of good works, ethical behavior etc. Pointing out that in the process of dying we are faced with a paradox, he says: "Man accepts the reality of organic and objective death, but cannot imagine his own extinction. We find it impossible to imagine a world that will not feel our presence in some way." He sums up the importance of fathoming the meaning of the crucial experience of death:

Hope and the acceptance of death are symbiotic. The inescapable fact of death belongs to the incomprehensible act of living. The living need the dying as the dying need the living.

for the same reasons. If we accept being alive, then we must accept the fact of death.

A Stoic View?

Concluding that understanding the ordeal of death is not separate from the need to comprehend life, since both are aspects of the existence which forms the field of human endeavor, he observes:

> Significant survival and dignified death go hand in hand to the exit. When we finally realize that the future is an illusion, it no longer matters, because we find ourselves acting according to an inner biological mandate. Denial and dread notwithstanding, it is within human powers to greet death ruefully, but without regret.

Implied in these comments is the assumption that the ideas we hold regarding the nature of man are crucial. To the extent that those ideas are drawn from a careful observation of nature, this writer seems to suggest, we may reach to the elevated common sense that was characteristic of the Stoic philosophers, who disdained to make a fuss about a universal process and regarded great anxiety about the future state as a philosophic or moral weakness. Yet the implicit pantheism of the Stoics was itself a recognition of the presence in the world of enduring reality, in which the self of man participates. One might see in this hardly articulated feeling the sense if not a doctrine of immortality. But most people long naturally for an extension of this idea of enduring reality in more particular terms, in a conception of immortality. This would give logical ground to Dr. Weisman's view that "hope and acceptance of death are symbiotic," and would be consistent, also, with his idea that "significant survival and dignified death go hand in hand."

The Eloquence of Death

Simply because he has done so much with the idea of death with only a passing reference to the conception of reincarnation, Dr. Weisman seems to have created a matrix of thought completely hospitable to this philosophical teaching of immortality. He is, one might say, philosophical without allowing the natural development of his position to become explicit. The world of ordinary men needs more than the austere Stoic conception of death, ennobling though it may be. In his *Letters,* Mr. Judge speaks of "just, eloquent, and mighty death." That the portals of another life lie beyond the falling curtain of death is perhaps the conception that gives death its eloquence for all but the most exceptional of men.

Fewer Transfusions

According to a *Los Angeles Times* report (Nov. 18, 1972), blood transfusions in cases of open-heart surgery, once a common practice, have now been reduced by fifty per cent. One surgeon who was interviewed attributed the change to improvements in surgical techniques and the use of drugs which do not depress the heart. But the reduction in the number of transfusions appears also to be due to the refusal of patients who are Jehovah's Witnesses to accept transfusions.

The rejection of transfusions, based by the Witnesses on biblical references which they interpret as prohibitions, has what might be read as support, even if under-publicized, in scientific literature. The increasing incidence of liver inflammation from infectious hepatitis and cirrhosis, traced to blood transfusions, has underlined the practical necessity for caution, and made obvious the importance of the medical history of donors. But the common occurrence of infection from the blood donors may have a subtler correspondence in psychic linkages established between the donor and the recipient of blood. The November 1939 issue of *Coronet* relates the experience of a professional blood donor who felt pain in his arm each time a person to whom he had given blood died (see Lookout 28: 277), indicating that the blood is carrier of potencies other than disease-producing viruses.

"Constitution" of Blood

In a footnote to an article by Alexander Wilder in the *Theosophist* (Vol. V, p. 82), H. P. Blavatsky suggests that the constitution of the blood is indeed considerably more than physical. Referring to the theory that "there is an animal spirit generated in the blood," she says:

> This theory and belief is an echo from the Sanctuaries of the initiated hierophants. It is not "an animal spirit *generated* in the blood" but blood itself is one of the innumerable states of that Spirit or the *One Life* of Esotericism: Ether, vapour, ozone, animal electricity etc., and finally animal blood.

The combination of unfavorable side-effects with the adamant refusal of a sizable minority to cooperate has apparently impelled surgeons, techniques permitting, to reduce materially the number of cases in which there is an indiscriminate mixing of vital life fluids.

Doctors and Patients

Dr. Robert D. Conn, a cardiologist who was a speaker at the annual meeting in Los Angeles of the California Academy of General Practice, said in an interview that certain responsibilities for good health belong naturally to the individual, not to his doctor (*Los Angeles Times,* April 14, 1972). Dr. Conn told the *Times* interviewer: "Medicine can determine what good health is and develop a mechanism for achieving it, but the responsibility is the patient's." The *Times* report continues:

> Dr. Conn, who is professor and chairman of the department of medicine at Southern Illinois University, blames academic medicine for what he sees as the failure of doctors to create the right kinds of expectations in patients.
>
> Somehow, he said, medicine has created dependency needs in patients—the notion that only a doctor can help them.
>
> Doctors have fostered this by offering pills for everything. So the public has grown to expect the doctor to be responsible for them when they should be responsible for themselves.

Need for Self-Reliance

The heart specialist said that the wrong sort of expectations have been encouraged by doctors who give drugs to alleviate even the minor ills that are clearly the result of patients' abuse of their own health. In such cases, he said, it is up to the patient, not the doctor, to take the corrective action.

This is a reform that needs the initiative of both doctors and patients. For too long, medicine, like other specialties and professions, has been fostering authoritarian attitudes with submissive acceptance on the part of laymen, and long years will be occupied in the restoration of self-reliance in matters of health. Another sign of growing awareness of the need for less dependence upon doctors is a column in the new community magazine, *Communitas,* conducted by two writers with medical degrees. They believe that medicine ought to teach "self-sufficiency, not dependence; it must deal with health, not simply disease." These doctors hope to help people who are "interested in learning to care for themselves as much as possible."

Kandinsky and Theosophy

Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), the Russian painter who achieved fame as the principal founder of the modern movement of abstract or non-objective art, is often casually spoken of as hav-

ing been influenced or inspired by Theosophy, and his book, *The Spiritual in Art,* does indeed speak respectfully of H. P. Blavatsky and contains a quotation from *The Voice of the Silence.* Yet the recognition of the "influence" spoken of has remained something of a puzzle for students who have inspected his work, and for whom the word "spiritual" has a more philosophic content. It is of interest, then, to know that a recent book, *The Sounding Cosmos,* by Sixten Ringbom, published in Helsinki, Finland, in 1970 by Abo Akademi, throws considerable light on the kind of "Theosophy" which provided Kandinsky with his ideas about the value and importance of abstract painting. The need for clarification is emphasized by the comment on Mr. Ringbom's monograph by Hilton Kramer, art editor of the *New York Times,* who said in a review last summer (July 23, 1972): "His work is subtitled 'A Study in the Spiritualism of Kandinsky and the Genesis of Abstract Painting,' and it plunges us straight-away in to the murky shallows of theosophy where reason bows to the irrational and there is literally nothing too farfetched to be entertained as a revelation of eternal truth."

"Thought-Forms"

Apparently some art historians, eager to free the origins of abstract art from such wild associations, have tried to show that Kandinsky was affected only casually by what these writers all call "Theosophy," and the issue has been argued back and forth by scholars at some length. This book, however, shows beyond doubt that Kandinsky was indeed deeply influenced and his work affected by the writings of Rudolph Steiner, and also the works of Annie Besant and C. W. Leadbeater, in particular their book *Thought-Forms,* which was represented by them to be a graphic portrayal of the forms assumed by thought and feeling, as seen by clairvoyant perception. Steiner's treatise on color, Ringbom shows, was also largely based on the Besant-Leadbeater volume. From page after page of plates comparing illustrations from *Thought-Forms* with Kandinsky's abstractions, the influence Mr. Ringbom describes becomes manifest. This is not to suggest that Kandinsky was not an accomplished artist, or that he was a "copyist," but only to indicate what he and his various interpreters and critics understand by "Theosophical" influence. Needless to say, there is practically no connection between these "thought-forms" and the teachings of H. P.

Blavatsky. They are the invention of Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater, and the work of their illustrators.

The Painter's Ideas

Kandinsky was a painter who was looking for forms in which to clothe an artist's conception of transcendental reality, and he found full justification for this hope in the work of Steiner and in *Thought-Forms*. He thought that the materialism of the age would soon be replaced by a more spiritual culture, and that abstract art would help to pioneer this development. He had read *The Key to Theosophy* and knew some other of H.P.B.'s works, but was hardly a student of the philosophy. Other painters of his time, most notably Mondrian, had similar interests and theories, but while Mondrian joined the Theosophical Society, Kandinsky, Ringbom says, did not, probably because he wished to retain his independence. But when European writers speak of Theosophy, they seem almost always to mean the work of Rudolph Steiner, and the influence of "Theosophy," so-called, is in terms of Steiner's teachings, which he named Anthroposophy, after being expelled from the Society in 1913, on the issue of the Krishnamurti affair. Mr. Ringbom remarks that "by 1911 it was clear that Steiner, who had originally adopted Theosophy as a platform for his own teachings, was heading for a clash with Mrs. Besant."

Natural Cycles

Observation of trees in the Ward Pound Ridge reservation in New York has disclosed that a pest, the gypsy moth, once thought to have endangered the forest, is subject to its own cyclic periods of rise and fall, making the application of insecticides of questionable value. (The *New York Times,* Sept. 24, 1972.) Parts of this county park that suffered severe infestation in the summer of 1970 have completely recovered. The next year that area was left unsprayed while others were treated with an insecticide. At the end of the 1972 season both areas were in equally good condition. According to Stanley Wecker, a City College biologist, "People should be aware that gypsy moths do go away, and they don't leave a petrified forest behind them."

No Lasting Damage

The *Times* report said further:

> There are various reasons for the gypsy moth population to collapse naturally. They have a number of natural predators

and are susceptible to wilt disease, caused by a virus. Dr. Wecker believes that spraying may interfere with the normal population cycle and prevent the population from coming under these long-term natural controls.

The gypsy moths do their damage by eating huge quantities of leaves while in the caterpillar stage. By depriving a tree of its ability to produce food—defoliation can kill trees, especially young or previously weakened ones.

Mr. Nicholas Shoumatoff, the park naturalist, said that the heavy defoliation of the 1970 season had helped to thin out trees in the forest that would probably not have survived anyway, but he found no evidence that the moth infestation had cost lasting damage.

A Sly Use of Ecology?

The resort to "natural" means of pest control is already becoming an objective among forward-looking ecologists, with many experiments of this sort going on in a number of fields. Specific organisms are sought as the "natural enemies" of pests, and in some cases are being successfully introduced to meet the problems of agriculturalists. However, as Barry Commoner pointed out in *Harper's* for last June, ingenious tricks with ecology must not be used as a means of avoiding the consequences of humanly introduced imbalances, whether biological or social. An example of what may happen when this is attempted is available in the effort of Pakistani scientists (reported in the *Los Angeles Times* for last April 30) to find an insect that will eat only marijuana or opium plants without attacking other crops which are agriculturally valuable. The program is financed by the United Nations and by governmental agencies in the United States, as part of the drive to solve the worldwide drug problem. But it happens that in Pakistan, a Muslim country, the Marijuana plant (*cannabis*) is rarely used as an intoxicant; and in Nepal it is used for making twine, as a balm for sore muscles, and in cooking as a substitute for butter. An entomologist at the research station in Pakistan where the search for an anti-Marijuana insect is being carried on seemed pleased at the idea that such an insect, if discovered, could be introduced without the knowledge of the farmers—a procedure which, in view of the circumstances, seems an invasion of their rights. Obviously, there are wheels within wheels of moral responsibility when solution of the moral problems of the West is such that it makes secret manip-

ulation of farming practice half-way round the world seem desirable.

Behind the "Drug Problem"

An article in *Saturday Review* (Sept. 11, 1972) by Richard H. de Lone suggests that meeting the needs of adolescents in the area of drug education in a realistic manner could hold the key to meeting educational problems in general. Fortified with the judgments of review teams of the National Coordinating Council for Drug Education, who found most of the films and other materials they examined either worthless or possibly harmful, Mr. de Lone severely criticizes the programs that are being offered by public education. These programs, he says, are conducted by teachers who do not understand the problem, are riddled with misinformation, and disseminated through "superficial educational processes," some being definitely racist in character. Yet none of these criticisms, he adds, really exposes the root of the problem. Their basic flaw is that they rely on didactic warnings against the dangers of drug abuse, undoubtedly containing much truth but ignoring entirely the question of what problems are so pressing and appear so hopeless to the young that drug use becomes an attractive solution.

Moralizing Ineffective

For illustration he quotes the statement of objectives made by the President's Advisory Committee on Narcotics and Drugs nine years ago:

> The teen-ager should be made conscious of the full range of harmful effects, physical and psychological, that narcotics and dangerous drugs can produce. He should be made aware that, although the use of a drug may be a temporary means of escape from the world about him, in the long run these drugs will destroy him and all he aspires to.

On first impression this statement appears reasonable because what it says is, in all probability, quite true. But, as a basis for educational policy and a principle of action, it is wide of the mark. As Mr. de Lone observes, most youngsters are already as much aware of the dangers of drug abuse as they are of the hypocrisy of their barbiturate- and alcohol-consuming elders who are proposing to make them aware of these hazards. But perhaps even more significant, from an egoic point of view, is his observation that, even though children may be as much in need of accurate information as

their parents and teachers, they have little need to be "made aware" of the drug problem; while the questions they *are* asking can not be answered in terms of how it will "destroy them and all they aspire to." As this writer says: "Knowledge on demand is not the same as knowledge thrust upon you."

Sanctuaries from "Education"

Mr. de Lone proposes instead of this sort of instruction a radical revision of the school culture. He says:

> Scrutinize the drug-education problem long enough and it becomes the school problem. Drug abuse is a peculiar microscope magnifying many of the flaws in education (not to mention in society at large), that reformers have carped about from Rousseau to Silberman. It is precisely for this reason that the drug issue has potential to become a powerful lever for school reform.

Mr. de Lone believes that young people need to have choices and responsibilities that are not manufactured or managed. And while such sweeping changes may seem unlikely, he feels that they can be brought about indirectly by meeting the problem presented by teen-age drug abusers. This has been tried with promising results in New York City public school drug-prevention programs, involving a variety of alternative classes and groups—temporary "sanctuaries" of various kinds. These classes demonstrate to young people prone to serious drug abuse that genuine involvement in interesting and challenging activities can be a reality. The author explains, however, that the reason such attempts often fail to get off the ground is that the responsibility delegated by adults is so conditional that it becomes a farce:

> The crucial precondition for success of student-led programs is a school that is willing to modify its regimen sufficiently to permit students really to take responsibility and action—even if that means, as it often does, rocking the boat, especially if students raise questions about the schools that go beyond drugs per se. A major obstacle to the success of peer-group programs is that administration concern for "responsible leadership" becomes a euphemism for "tight control."

Again, self-reliance is seen to be the key to the problem of the schools, which comes into focus in drug abuse.

Myth in Education?

Rita Oleyar's argument (*Los Angeles Times,* Nov. 19, 1972) supporting inclusion of the Bible myth of creation in forthcoming

California science textbooks is of particular interest. She says:

> Modern man is fragmented because we have tried to separate him into mutually exclusive compartments. The child is torn from his parents, taken to school, where he is dosed with a little of this and a little of that—an hour of reading, an hour of arithmetic, a cup of social studies, a teaspoon of science, etc. Any attempts on the part of far-seeing, compassionate people to bring things together for him is met with screams from the empire builders.
>
> Let us return to a more mythological approach to education —no, let us simply admit that we all live by myth. Let us recognize that the things we try to live by are myths, i.e., our feeble attempts to make sense out of the apparent chaos around us, more or less factual, more or less imaginative answers to unanswered questions, based upon bits and pieces of observation, and tested for validity with the most valid instrument at our disposal.

Will it Be Taught as "Myth"?

By way of comment, it seems pertinent, first, to say that the presentation of the Garden of Eden story as "myth" seems a considerable stride of progress since the days of the Scopes trial and the fundamentalist claims of William Jennings Bryan. As an argument, the views of Miss Oleyar, who teaches the Bible as literature in a California college, seem acceptable enough. But her contentions may perhaps be more than enough from the viewpoint of the sponsors of the proposed addition to the science curriculum of the California schools. After all, hers is an argument, not in behalf of the Bible myth alone, but for *all* myths, and some myths may prove better than others, when "tested for validity with the most valid instrument at our disposal." What is that instrument? Not, we hope, blind sectarian tradition, but reason and common sense joined with some knowledge of philosophy and comparative religion. It should be remembered, also, that as the Supreme Court of the United States has recently declared, various religions are now substantially represented in the ethnically diverse population of the country, so that at least several "creation" or "evolution" myths deserve treatment in the schools, and especially is this the case as a protection against any suspicion of violation of the First Amendment. It is one thing to get the Bible story into the school system in the guise of a "myth," and another to make sure that it is taught as a myth—requiring imaginative, not literal, reading or interpretation.